

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:
JOHN M. CURRAN



Application No.: 10/613,539

Filing Date: 07/03/03

FOR: IMPROVED SYSTEM AND
METHOD FOR FACILITATING PIPE AND
CONDUIT COUPLING

REPLY TO NOTIFICATION OF
NONCOMPLIANT APPEAL BRIEF
MAILED 2/18/2009

EXAMINER: J. M. HEWITT

Art Unit: 3679

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Arlington, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

In reply to the notice of noncompliant appeal brief mailed 02/18/2009, kindly enter the
within amendment.

-- Status of Claims --

Claim 1 (Under final rejection and appeal)

A system for facilitating coupling pipes at their ends in substantially fluid – tight relationship comprising:

(1) Clamping means for clamping around said pipe ends said clamping means including at least one screwhole for receiving at least one screw for fastening, by securing at least one nut thereon, said clamping means over gasket means and said pipe ends , said at least one screw being configured such that it is loosely disposed in said at least one screw hole of said clamping means prior to fastening of said clamping means around said pipe ends;

(2) gasket means for interposition between said clamping means and said pipe ends; and

(3) resilient retention means, resiliently engageable with said at least one screw, for loosely retaining said at least one screw in said at least one screw hole while said at least one screw is loosely disposed in said at least one screw hole prior to fastening said clamping means together by securing said at least one nut with said at least one screw, said resilient retention means being resiliently positionable from the side of the shank and from the front of the shank of said at least one screw

into engagement with said at least one screw to loosely retain said at least one screw in said screw hole prior to fastening said clamping means together by securing said at least one nut with said at least one screw.

Claim 2. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said retention means is frictionally resiliently engageable with said at least one screw by placement between threads thereof to provide said retention.

Claim 3. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said resilient retention means is resiliently positionable on the end of the shank of said at least one screw for frictional resilient engagement therewith.

Claim 4. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said resilient retention means comprises a member composed of resilient material.

Claim 5. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means is thin relative to the length of said at least one screw.

Claim 6. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means is composed of resilient metal.

Claim 7. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means defines at least one internal opening for being positioned onto said at least one screw from the end of the shank thereof.

Claim 8. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means defines at least one lateral opening having two separate ends for sideways resilient positioning of said retention means upon the shank of said at least one screw by resiliently displacing from each other said two ends of said at least one lateral opening to accommodate said at least one screw.

Claim 9. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means has a generally circular configuration.

Claim 10. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said retention means has a generally square configuration.

Claim 11. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 7 wherein said at least one internal opening is substantially polygonal.

Claim 12. (Under final rejection and appeal).

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The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means includes adhesive means for adhesion to said at least one screw.

Claim 13. (Under final rejection and appeal).

In a pipe coupling system for coupling pipe ends in substantially fluid – tight relationship including gasket means positionable on said pipe ends and clamping means fastenable on said pipe ends and said gasket means, said clamping means being fastenable by securing at least one nut on said at least one screw insertable through at least one screw hole in said clamping means, said at least one screw being loosely disposed in said at least one screw hole prior to securing of said at least one screw by said at least one nut, the improvement comprising:

resilient retention means for loosely retaining said at least one screw in place when loosely disposed in said at least one screw hole inserted in said clamping means and prior to fastening of said clamping means by securing said at least one nut on said at least one screw, said resilient retention means being resiliently positionable from the side of the shank of said at least one screw into retention engagement to loosely retain said at least one screw in said at least one screw hole.

Claim 14. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means is frictionally resiliently engageable with said at least one screw.

Claim 15. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means is resiliently positionable at the end of the shank of said at least one screw for frictional resilient engagement therewith.

Claim 16. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means comprises a member composed of resilient material.

Claim 17. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means is thin relative to the length of said at least one screw.

Claim 18. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means is composed of resilient metal.

Claim 19. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means defines at least one internal opening for being placed onto said at least one screw from the end of the shank thereof.

Claim 20. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means defines at least one lateral opening having two separate ends for resilient sidewise placing of said resilient retention means upon the shank of said at least one screw by displacing said two separate ends from each other to accommodate said at least one screw.

Claim 21. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means has a generally circular configuration.

Claim 22. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means has a generally square configuration.

Claim 23. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 19 wherein at least one internal opening is substantially polygonal.

Claim 24. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means include adhesive means for adhesion to said at least one screw.

Claim 25. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means is positionable upon said at least one screw from the side of the shank thereof for frictional

resilient engagement between threads of said at least one screw therewith.

Claim 26 (Under final rejection and appeal).

A method for facilitating coupling at least two conduits at their ends in substantially fluid-tight relationship comprising the steps of:

- (1) providing gasket means for disposition upon said at least two conduits;
- (2) providing clamping means for clamping around said conduit ends and including at least one screw hole for receiving at least one screw for fastening said clamping means upon said gasket means and said conduit ends in substantially fluid-tight relationship by securing at least one nut to said at least one screw;
- (3) placing said at least one screw loosely in said at least one screw hole prior to securing said at least one nut to said at least one screw; and
- (4) disposing resilient retention means laterally upon the side of the shank of or upon the front of said at least one screw to prevent said at least one screw from exiting said at least one screw hole prior to said fastening of said clamping means and said gasket means.

Claim 27. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The method as set forth in Claim 26 wherein said resilient retention means is frictionally resiliently engageable with said at least one screw to accomplish retention thereof.

Claim 28. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The method of Claim 26 further including the step of fastening said gasket means and said clamping means onto said conduit ends by tightening said at least one screw until substantially fluid-tight relationship is achieved between said conduits.

Claim 29. (Under final rejection and appeal).

The method of Claim 26 wherein said conduits comprise pipes.

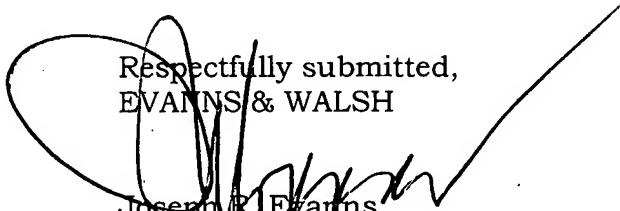
-- Remarks --

The inquiry in the notification of noncompliant appeal brief mailed 2/18/09 appears to be misplaced and misidentified: there is no issue with the appeal brief filed in this case—the supplemental appeal brief having been filed herein on February 17, 2009 in response to a notification of noncompliant appeal brief mailed 11/14/2008.

The explanation for the appeal brief in the case of Applicant Max Friedheim (a client of this office) bearing the serial number 10/613,539 referred to in the 2/18/2009 notification of noncompliant appeal brief is that by inadvertence, on 11/13/2008, the appeal brief for the Max Friedheim patent application, Serial No. 10/066,081, was misidentified as having Serial No. 10/613,539, the serial number for the instant application. By telephone and fax, Examiner Paik (Examiner on 10/066,081) has been notified of the oversight as has Patent Appeals Specialist Tracey Young, who issued the 11/14/2008 notification of noncompliant appeal brief.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the appeal of the instant application should go forward without delay.

Dated: 02/23/2009

Respectfully submitted,
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